

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11331

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E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: PROPAGANDA AND POPULAR ATTITUDES IN QUANG NGAI

FOL SENT ACTION SAIGON FM DANANG AND RPTD FOR YOUR INFO QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 0766

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJ: PROPAGANDA AND POPULAR ATTITUDES IN QUANG NGAI

QUANG NGAI POLOFF REPORTS THE FOLLOWING:

1. THE JOINT CEASEFIRE COMMUNIQUE HAS PROMPTED AN UPSWING IN PRG PROPAGANDA ACTIVITY DURING THE PAST WEEK. PREDICTABLY COMMUNIST PROPAGANDISTS ARE INTERPRETING THE COMMUNIQUE AS ANOTHER VICTORY FOR THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION, NOTING IN PARTICULAR US CONCESSIONS TO RESUME MINE SWEEPING OPERATIONS AND ECONOMIC AID DISCUSSIONS AND TO HALT AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE OVER THE NORTH. THE PROPAGANDISTS ARE USING THE CENTRAL SLOGAN " PEACE IS A COMMON VICTORY" (FOR THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE) TO TIE TOGETHER THEIR EARLIER POST-CEASEFIRE PROPAGANDA THEMES CALLING FOR BOTH SIDES TO PUT ASIDE

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THEIR WEAPONS AND JOIN IN PEACEFUL POLITICAL COMPETITION. AT THE SAME TIME THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO UPBRAID THE GVN FOR " VIOLATING THE CEASEFIRE."

2. THE GVN, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS BEEN SLOW IN PROJECTING ITS OWN INTERPRETATION OF THE COMMUNIQUE, WHICH MAY PERHAPS SUGGEST SOME DISSATISFACTION WITH IT. IN AT LEAST ONE INSTANCE, WHEN PRG CADRE SET UP LOUDSPEAKERS IN SON HAI VILLAGE NEAR THE BATANGAN PENINSULA TO BROADCAST THEIR APPEALS, THE GVN'S IMMEDIATE RESPONSE WAS TO CALL IN ARTILLERY FIRE TO SILENCE THE BROADCAST.

3. POPULAR ATTITUDES: IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH A VARIETY OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS THE QUANG NGAI POLOFF HAS DETECTED A NOTE OF DEEPENING PESSIMISM ABOUT SOUTH

VIETNAM'S POLITICAL FUTURE. THE PESSIMISM STEMS NOT SO MUCH FROM FEARS ABOUT COMMUNIST INTENTIONS, MILITARY OR POLITICAL, AS FROM GROWING DOUBTS ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO RESPOND TO PRESSING ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. SEVERAL INFORMANTS HAVE REMARKED THAT ONE OF THE HOPES THAT HAD ACCOMPANIED THE SIGNING OF THE CEASEFIRE ACCORD IN JANUARY WAS THAT THE NECESSITY OF HAVING TO COMPETE WITH THE COMMUNISTS POLITICALLY WOULD PROMPT THE GVN INTO CARRYING OUT NEEDED GOVERNMENTAL REFORMS.

4. THESE INFORMANTS CLAIM THAT THOUGH THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER SENIOR GVN OFFICIALS HAVE PAID CONSIDERABLE LIP SERVICE TO THE NEED FOR REFORM, THEIR PROMISES REMAIN UNFULFILLED; CORRUPTION REMAINS AN UNDIMINISHED SCOURGE; GOVERNMENT CADRE LACK DIRECTION AND PURPOSE; THE PUBLIC INTEREST IS PLACED A DISTANT SECOND TO PRIVATE WANTS. TO MANY, THE PROBLEMS APPEAR SO GREAT THAT THEY CANNOT BE SOLVED INTERNALLY. THE DEPTH OF THE PESSIMISM IS MARKED BY THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH ONE ENCOUNTERS THE NOTION, WHETHER DIRECT OR IMPLIED, THAT IT LITERALLY REMAINS TO THE US TO SAVE SVN FROM ITSELF. THOMSEN UNQUOTE
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